

Bessie Pan
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Ms. Cynthia Lie
Office of the Federal Public Defender
160 West Santa Clara Street
Suite 575
San Jose, CA 95113

To: Ms. Cynthia Lie,
the Court, and
To Whom It May Concern

Re: Dominic Chang

My name is Bessie Pan and I am a resident of San Carlos, California. I am a long-time friend of Mr. Dominic Chang. In this letter I would like to give an account of my friendship with Dominic, and my perception of the kind of person Dominic Chang is.

My husband and Dominic have been friends since they knew each other in Hong Kong. I first met Dominic and his wife Lucia in the winter of 1979, when they first arrived in the U.S. and settled in San Jose, California. I believe that my husband and I were one of their first friends here in the Bay Area. When Dominic and his wife arrived here, Lucia was pregnant with her first child, Jonathan. We became such good friends that I was asked to be Jonathan's godmother, even before he was born. I delightfully accepted the honor.

From the beginning Dominic was a hardworking man. He did not have a lot of education, perhaps high school level. Later they had another child, a daughter. In the beginning years it was a struggle as Dominic worked hard to support his family. He was a great mechanic and excelled in being an auto mechanic. He never stopped working hard throughout the years, usually working 6, or sometimes 7-day weeks for as long as I've known him. Through hard work he gradually built up financial stability for his family, was able to purchase his own home and have his own business. Even in his most difficult years, he has never sought welfare from the government or any kind of subsidy from anyone.

Dominic is a loyal and generous friend and a loving father. He provided for his two children very well, and supported them through college and even beyond. My godson Jonathan has completed his studies at U.C. Berkeley, obtained his J.D. at New York University, and has been working and practicing law for the past two years. He is engaged soon to be married and will start a new life and his own family. His younger sister Jennifer graduated from U.C. San Diego and is currently studying for her J.D. at Northeastern University. These are great accomplishments on the children's part, but at the same time, a source of great comfort and pride for Dominic as well. I am very impressed and have nothing short of admiration for someone who hardly finished high school, but was able to put two children through their college education, all with his own hard work.

Dominic is a very loving and supportive father. He is always there for his children—at birthdays and many school activities. He is very much a family man, as we always get together not only on birthdays, but also at graduations, celebrations such as Chinese New Year, or just having lunches with his mother, whom he is very close to and continues to take care of as to this day.

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Dominic is one of the most generous and loyal friends that one could have. He is always ready with a helping hand, with old friends or new acquaintances alike. On countless occasions he has given his help wholeheartedly, never expecting anything in return. I recall several of these instances.

One was a restaurant worker that Dominic had met—this man works at the restaurant that Dominic frequents—not a close friend at all. The worker spoke no English, and had no relatives here, so when he fell sick Dominic took him to the hospital to see the doctor. Another time was when Dominic received a phone call from a friend's sister in Hong Kong, saying that her sister who has a mental condition, is missing. Dominic then searched and eventually found the missing woman, and took her to the mental hospital for treatment. She was in and out of the hospital several times, while Dominic tried to take care of her. Finally she had to return to China because of her condition, and Dominic took her to the airport himself, paying for the airfare.

There was still another case where a restaurant dishwasher had a persistent cough and was mistakenly diagnosed as having cancer. Consequently he needed a lot of tests, and Dominic would take him to the hospital for these tests, standing in line, and helping him (with English) with forms and hospital procedures. I last heard that this restaurant worker has retired and moved to New York, but he would always visit Dominic whenever he visits the Bay Area.

These are all (to me) amazing things that Dominic has done for others. There are many others, perhaps less dramatic or serious, but nevertheless, many people have benefited from his help. My husband and I are also among them. There was a period of time, years actually, when my husband's business failed and our financial situation was very unstable. That is when Dominic was tremendously generous in maintaining and repairing our only car with deferred payments, or even sometimes for free. We will always be indebted to this wonderful human being.

As to why Dominic Chang has gotten himself in trouble with tax issues, I am not clear. However, here are my observations and thoughts:

At about the time period in question, around 1999 to 2001, Dominic was undergoing tremendous stress and hardship. Divorced from his wife of 23 years, he had to single-handedly manage and work his business, practically 7 days a week, with very little time off. His children were two years apart in age, so that at the time, they were around 19 and 17 years old. Therefore, there were a number of years when both were attending college, and the financial burden must have been great for Dominic. He was extremely busy; his work was so good that customers always asked for Dominic. He often worked 14-hour days. Depressed from the divorce, tired and stressed from work and the financial burden, he started visiting casinos when he had any time. I imagine that that was his way of de-stressing and distracting himself, as a form of entertainment, as well as social interaction.

I therefore beseech the court that in the case of Mr. Dominic Chang, to grant him the most lenient sentence possible, as I can affirm that Mr. Chang is indeed a good person and a fine citizen.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Bessie Pan

/s